

REMARKS

Status of the Application

Claims 1-7 are the claims that have been examined in the instant application. Claims 1 and 4-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luke (U.S. 6,131,087) in view of Grdina (U.S. 6,965,872) and Aarnio (U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2004/0078274). Claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luke, Grdina and Aarnio as applied to claims 2 and 3 above, and further in view of Mandler (U.S. 6,785,661).

By the Amendment, Applicants are amending claims 1-7 and adding new claims 8-14.

Preliminary Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim to foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, but respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the priority document submitted to the Patent and Trademark Office on December 19, 2001.

Applicant further requests that the Examiner acknowledge acceptance of the drawings submitted November 15, 2001.

With regard to the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed June 7, 2004, Applicant submits that the English translation of the Japanese Office Action submitted along the references provides a concise explanation of the reference. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider and initial the IDS.

Specification Objection

The Examiner objects to the abstract of the disclosure because it exceeds 150 words.

Applicant has corrected the noted deficiency. Withdrawal of the objection is hereby respectfully requested.

§103 Rejections

A. *Claims 1 and 4-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luke (U.S. 6,131,087) in view of Grdina (U.S. 6,965,872) and Aarnio (U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2004/0078274).*

Amended claim 1 recites, in part, “communicating the information request to a plurality of information provider terminals.” The Examiner alleges that a combination of Luke, Grdina and Aarnio renders amended claim 1 obvious. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The Examiner concedes that Luke fails to teach communicating the information request to a plurality of information provider terminals, but asserts that Grdina teaches this element of the present invention. Grdina discloses a method for facilitating the sale of commodity-like goods/services. Grdina establishes a database in which a retailer, who sells commodities, may upload information, such as name brand of a product, location of the retailer, price of product, and other available related goods/services, may be provided by the retailer. A consumer performs a query of the database, using various requirements. The consumer is then provided information regarding which retailer have commodities which meet the consumer’s search requirements. See col. 3, lines 4-28 of Grdina). However, Grdina fails to teach that the consumer query is provided *to a plurality of information provider terminals*. The consumer

query in Grdina is provided to a single database, not a plurality of information provider terminals.

Further, amended claim 1 recites “collecting pieces of selling price information that are received from part of said plurality of information provider terminals in response to the information request.” Again, the Examiner concedes that Luke fails to teach this aspect of amended claim 1, but alleges that Grdina teaches collecting pieces of selling price information that are received from part of said plurality of information provider terminals in response to the information request. Grdina teaches that selling price information is collected from an existing database, not that the selling price information is sent from a plurality of information provider terminals *in response to the information request*.

Moreover, Aarnio fails to cure the defects noted with respect to Grdina. Aarnio discloses an on-line subscription system and method for facilitating a transaction between a customer and a subscription server. The subscription server provides a user with information regarding available products at a predetermined period of time. However, Aarnio fails to communicate an information request to a plurality of information provider terminals.

Therefore, for the reasons listed above, amended claim 1 is patentable over the applied art. Claims 4-7 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from amended claim 1.

B. Claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luke, Grdina and Aarnio as applied to claims 2 and 3 above, and further in view of Mandler (U.S. 6,785,661).

Claims 2 and 3 are dependent from amended claim 1. Because the combination of Luke, Grdina and Aamio fail to teach or suggest all of the elements of amended claim 1, and because Mandler fails to cure the defects noted with respect to amended claim 1, claims 2 and 3 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

New Claims

Applicant is hereby adding new claims 8-15. Claims 8-14 are apparatus claims corresponding to and reciting similar elements to amended claims 1-7. Therefore, claims 8-14 are allowable for reasons analogous to those presented with respect to amended claims 1-7. Claim 15 is directed to a management server and recites elements similar to claims 1 and 8, and is patentable for reasons analogous thereto.

Conclusion

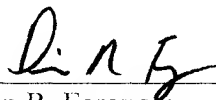
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application 09/987,667

Q67321

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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